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CONSERVATION COMMISSION  
375 MERRIMACK STREET  
LOWELL CITY HALL  
LOWELL, MASSACHUSETTS 01852  
**January 8, 2020**

**Note:** These minutes are not completed verbatim. For further detail, video recordings are available at the Pollard Library, second floor reference desk or online at [www.LTC.org](http://www.LTC.org).

**Members Present:** Chairwoman Varnum, Commissioner Lovely, Commissioner Dillon, and Commissioner Downs

**Members Absent:** Commissioner Biedron and Commissioner Buitenhuys

**Others Present:**

Jared Alves, Associate Planner  
Fran Cigliano, Assistant Planner

**CALL TO ORDER**

7:04p.m.

**ORDER OF BUSINESS**

**CONTINUED BUSINESS**

**Enforcement Order**

Benjamin Rivera  
172 Eighteenth Street  
Lowell, MA 01854

Violation Location: 172 Eighteenth Street 01854

Property owner removed existing wall along the perimeter of the rear property line. The rear property line essentially delineates the edge of the Bordering Vegetated Wetlands. The applicant relocated the rock wall to create a "pathway" further into the wetlands.

**On Behalf:**

None.

**Offered Comments:**

None.

**Discussion:**

Commissioner Varnum: No progress in that regard today. Keeping on agenda and moving to next meeting date.

**Motion:**

None.

**Enforcement Order**

RB Lowell Meadow Brook LLC

211 Plain Street

Lowell, MA 01852

Violation Location: 211 Plain Street 01852

Tree removal along River Meadow Brook without a permit

**Discussion:**

Commissioner Varnum: No updates to report, moved to next agenda in 2 weeks.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

Lowell High School: 50 Father Morissette Boulevard 01852

Presentation of the planned expansion and renovation of Lowell High School

**On Behalf:**

Joseph Brown, Perkins Eastman Architects

Jonathan Hedlund, Nistch Engineering

Mark Gabriel, Nistch Engineering

**Discussion:**

Mr. Brown: The school currently does not have outdoor space. Some gym activities take place outside across the street near garage. Beyond that you can see 1980s portion of the high school. Renovating. We of course have the canal, bridges connecting both sides of the canal. Then we have the 1922 building, a series of buildings built starting in 1890s.

Chairwoman Varnum: Oldest part of high school remaining there?

Mr. Brown: Yes, renovating, historical structure remains but complete renovation on the inside.

Mr. Brown: This is our timeline. Started in 2016, have been working with the City and MSBA. We are in the gold bar phase. We are at the 90% mark for design. It is a good time to meet with the Conservation Commission. We are wrapping up design in late February. About five years of construction. This is a site plan. You can see the existing gymnasium that will be demolished. Johnathan is going to take over.

Mr. Hedlund: The site itself, we are considering development, state would consider redevelopment. Let's jump into utilities.

Commissioner Dillon: What's going to happen to the old Freshman Academy?

Mr. Brown: That gets turned over to the School Department.

Mr. Hedlund: So I mentioned 100 year flood plain. We want to note we are not regrading. Stormwater system – main system underneath turf field, take majority of runoff from the roof. The smaller system to the north is going to show how stormwater flows into the ground for students, educational tool. On the eastern side, looking to discharge runoff into the canal itself, option 1. Option 2, keep drainage system in current building. In conclusion, we are looking to prepare an NOI or RDA. NOI for Option 1, RDA if we pipe into City system for Option 2.

Chairwoman Varnum: Will you be coming here with an RDA?

Mr. Hedlund: We will come for RDA if Option 2. This is what we talked to the City about, this is our understanding.

Chairwoman Varnum: We did have conversation with last renovation, with the bridges. That did not impact the canal. Are you constructing a third bridge?

Mr. Brown: We are building two new bridges, south side, replaces the one currently there. North side is further north, removing that one and moving it down in southerly direction for better circulation and better view of historic building. Improves 1922 visibility.

Chairwoman Varnum: The raingardens are along the sides of the canal?

Mr. Hedlund: Along Fr. Morrissette, not along the canal.

Chairwoman Varnum: Is that at grade level?

Mr. Hedlund: Small depressions within the sidewalk.

Chairwoman Varnum: How will you protect against student foot traffic?

Mr. Hedlund: The landscape architect is coming up with scheme of the design. We have the rain gardens close to the building to keep away from foot traffic, keep adequate path of travel.

Chairwoman Varnum: This whole plan has landscaping elements?

Mr. Hedlund: Oh yes.

Chairwoman Varnum: Sounds like a lot of improvements.

Commissioner Lovely: Timeline for NOI or RDA?

Mr. Brown: Design development phase finishes in Feb, so it would be right after design development.

Commissioner Lovely: So probably March, April?

Mr. Hedlund: Yes, still forthcoming.

Chairwoman Varnum: Any investigation of canal walls during this process? I know the canal is owned by someone else. I wonder if there was any work that perhaps needed to be done.

Mr. Gabriel: Not aware of any condition assessment of the wall. More of looking at whether we can discharge runoff into canal. That would be coming down the road if we pursue that option.

Chairwoman Varnum: I think that is one of the better preserved canals.

Mr. Gabriel: We will get back with more specific dates.

Commissioner Lovely: Yes, makes sense.

Chairwoman Varnum: That's basically the parts that affect us as a Commission. I would be interested to see the plans, I missed the planning sessions. I know that is not what we are here for tonight. Not more impactful than

what is here now. We are concerned with during construction, how things will be preserved. I'll be interested in your NOI and RDA when it comes along.

**Annual Election of Officers**

Commissioner Dillon motioned to elect Commissioner Biedron as Vice Chair and Chairwoman Varnum as Chairwoman. Commissioner Lovely seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, (4-0).

**Minutes**

December 11, 2019

Chairwoman Varnum: Push to next meeting. Check over and make sure everything is there.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Commissioner Downs motioned to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Lovely seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, (4-0).

**Time:**

7:26p.m.